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DATE:

June 12, 2003

CLIENT MATTER:

6774.110

# PLEASE DELIVER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO:

RECIPIENT

COMPANY

FAX NO.

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Edward C. Anton

State Water Resources Control

916-341-5400

Board

Total number of pages including this page: If you do not receive all the pages, please call (805) 963-7000.

Attached please find a second copy of the Southern California Water Company's Comments to Draft Order WRO-2003-XXXX, as well as Exhibit A for filing. Please note that Page 8 of the Comments was inadvertently left out of the original copy. Additionally, a second .pdf copy of both are being emailed.

Pam Wilson Assistant to Scott S. Slater Hatch & Parent 21 East Carrillo Street Santa Barbara, CA 93101 805-882-1480 805-965-4333 Fax pwilson@hatchparent.com

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WATER COMPANY

#### BEFORE THE

# STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

## STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In re Petition of Southern California Water Company to Revise the Declaration of Fully Appropriated Stream Systems Regarding the American River, Sacramento County

SCWC COMMENTS TO DRAFT ORDER WRO 2003-XXXX

The Draft Order WRO 2003-XXXX, issued in response to Southern California Water Company's ("SCWC" or "Petitioner") Petition for a Limited Revision of the Declaration of Fully Appropriated Stream Status of the Lower American River ("Petition"), is procedurally inconsistent with the SWRCB's own hearing notices regarding the scope of the underlying hearing, the representations and rulings of the Hearing Officer and the prior decisions of the SWRCB. The parties to the underlying proceeding were consistently admonished that their relative claims to the discharged groundwater would be addressed in the application phase, if any, in the event Petitioner could successfully demonstrate the existence of "new water." Despite these admonishments, the Draft Order turns on an initial legal conclusion which is based on

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factual assumptions that were beyond the clearly articulated scope of hearing and otherwise inconsistent with evidence that Petitioner was prevented from presenting.

In summary, after having denied Petitioners and others the opportunity to demonstrate why the discharged groundwater neither belongs to Aerojet nor is "abandoned," the Draft Order expresses the startling legal conclusion that the discharged water is "public water" precisely because it has been abandoned by Aerojet. The Draft Order proclaims that the circumstances under which Aerojet obtained its temporary custody of the groundwater are irrelevant, yet it concludes that because of these circumstances the groundwater is "abandoned" and therefore required to satisfy unmet needs of prior right holders.

Instead of allowing Petitioner the opportunity to establish a legal and equitable case for priority over unmet vested rights, the Draft Order would blindly and arbitrarily countenance the redistribution of the non-tributary groundwater for the benefit of the Bureau of Reclamation and the City of Sacramento, among others. While the Draft Order acknowledges that SCWC met the burden of demonstrating that the discharged water is in fact "new," it simply allocates the new water to the unmet needs of senior right holders after time and again throughout the proceedings having proclaimed that the question of whether the new water should be allocated to senior right holders would be considered in a later phase of the process.

On the other hand, perhaps the Draft Order is an expression of the SWRCB's retreat from a desire to manage water rights and water quality in a coordinated manner on the American River. If unmodified, the Draft Order will allow Aerojet to divert the percolating groundwater it contaminated and now discharges without the requirement of further permitting by the SWRCB. Because under the terms of the Draft Order, if the discharged groundwater is not abandoned by Aerojet, then it is not public water and it may be recaptured without regard to the unmet needs of downstream vested rights.

The impact of this jurisdictional retreat does not end there. If the SWRCB wishes to abdicate responsibility for setting terms and conditions for the diversion of the discharged groundwater where it is not abandoned by Aerojet, then it necessarily follows that Petitioner, who possesses a superior legal and equitable ownership interest in the treated groundwater in

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comparison to Aerojet, may also simply recapture the discharged non-tributary groundwater from the American River without the necessity of obtaining a permit from the SWRCB. This is so because Petitioner has not indicated any intention to abandon its rights to the discharged water. Consequently, if the Draft Order is holding that Aerojet, Petitioner and others are free to recapture the discharged groundwater without regard for the fully appropriated stream status under circumstances where they have not abandoned the supply, then Petitioner can promptly initiate diversion and litigate questions of priority with any person or agency that contends otherwise. Under this interpretation, Petitioner is happy to proceed forthwith, but respectfully requests that the matter be clarified in the Final Order.

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# NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS

Although Petitioner proved by overwhelming and uncontroverted evidence that "new water" is being added to the American River by Aerojet's discharge of contaminated percolating groundwater, the Draft Order concludes that Petitioner's request should be denied because Petitioner failed to demonstrate that the needs of senior right holders would be satisfied by the augmented supply. For the first time, the SWRCB announces a "two-prong test" for a successful petition that is neither supported by statute, regulation, nor the SWRCB's prior decisions. At the same time, the SWRCB denied Petitioner the ability to demonstrate its higher legal and equitable claim to the groundwater discharged by Aerojet – the very demonstration which would have been relevant to a determination under the new two-prong test – on the basis that such evidence would be relevant only at the application phase.

A. The Draft Order Does Not Reasonably Conform to the Notice Provided by the SWRCB

The SWRCB's regulations provide that hearings must be conducted according to the provisions of the California Administrative Procedure Act ("APA"). (Cal. Code Reg. Title 23 § 648(b).) Under the California APA, "The statement of the factual basis for [a] decision shall be

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based exclusively on the evidence of record in the proceeding and on matters officially not	nceo m
the proceeding." (Gov't. Code § 11425.50.) The burden that was assigned to SCWC durin	g the
pre-hearing process, " simply refers to whether there is new water" (April 26, 200)	2 Letter
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The Notice of the hearing established a standard against which SCWC's Petition was to be judged. The Draft Order acknowledges that SCWC met this standard, but then evaluated the Petition based upon an entirely different standard. This is a direct violation of Government Code § 11425.50. As a result of the procedural irregularities, the Draft Order denies Petitioner its due process rights and violates any notion of fundamental fairness associated with an administrative hearing. This has caused Petitioner prejudicial harm because under the standard that was articulated to Petitioner in the Notice, the Pre-Hearing Conference, the April 26, 2002 Letter from the Hearing Officer and in all of the subsequent discussions about the scope of the hearing, the Petition should have been granted.

# B. Notice, Pre-Hearing Conference, April 26, 2002 Letter and Subsequent Proceedings

On March 6, 2002, the SWRCB issued a Notice of Pre-Hearing Conference, Public Hearing and Petition to Revise Declaration of Fully Appropriated Stream Systems Regarding the American River, Sacramento County ("Notice"). The Notice described a phased process according to which the SWRCB would first determine whether water is available that could serve as the subject for an application, and then, in a separate proceeding, would determine the merits of such an application as compared to the needs of competing complainants and environmental requirements. The Notice for the pre-hearing conference said that:

The hearing on the petition to revise the Declaration is not a hearing on the merits of SCWC's water right application, nor would approval of the petition require a finding that water is available in the quantity or during the entire season of diversion specified in the application. (March 6, 2002 Notice p.4.)

The general question to be answered by the proceeding was to be whether the SWRCB should revise the Declaration to allow the Division of Water Rights to accept and process water

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right applications to appropriate treated groundwater discharged into the American River. (Ma	arcı
6, 2002 Notice p.4.) Toward this end, the Notice defined four specific issues to be resolved:	

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- Has adequate information been provided to demonstrate that there is a change in circumstances since the American River system was included in the FAS Declaration?
- How much, if any, of the water discharged by the groundwater treatment operations is water that was not considered at the time the American River system was included in the FAS Declaration?
- To what extent, if any, have flows in the American River been affected by groundwater treatment operations, including both pumping and discharging, since the American River system was included in the FAS Declaration?
  - Has the petitioner provided sufficient hydrologic data, water usage data, or other relevant information to support a determination that there is unappropriated water in the American River system during the season applied for to justify revising the Declaration for the purpose of accepting and processing water right applications related to the discharges of treated groundwater into the American River?

A pre-hearing conference was held on April 25, 2002, and a number of parties made appearances. Some indicated confusion on the intended scope of the hearing. (Pre-Hearing Conference RT, 11:11-20:14.) The Hearing Officer and staff counsel provided verbal clarification that the hearing would be limited to hydrologic conditions. (Pre-Hearing Conference RT, 12:12-15; 15:12-13.) In other words, the expressed guidance was that the SWRCB was to reserve for the second, or application, phase the question of who should get any water that is available, and in what quantities and when.

Following the pre-hearing conference, the requested clarification on the scope of the hearing was formally provided by the Hearing Officer in a letter dated April 26, 2002.

> For purposes of this proceeding, a finding that water is available simply refers to whether there is new water, different from the water understood to be available when the orders that are the basis for listing the stream on the Declaration were issued. Put another way, it means only that water is available that was not taken

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into consideration when it was originally determined that the river was fully appropriated.

A conclusion in this proceeding that water is available does not amount to a determination that water is "available for appropriation," consistent with Water Code sections 1243 and 1375, subsection (d) . . . .

This proceeding does not reach the merits of an application, including whether any "new" water identified in this proceeding is required to go to senior water users, or for environmental purposes.

(April 26, 2002 Letter p.2, emphasis added.)

In reliance on this letter of clarification, Petitioner reasonably assumed that its priority right to the groundwater contaminated by Aerojet and being treated and discharged into the American River as against the requirements of senior appropriators of native water would be addressed in the application phase. The entire emphasis of Petitioner's claim to priority over the unmet senior appropriations turns on the circumstances under which the groundwater is being discharged by Aerojet under a Regional Board clean-up order.

Based upon the Notice, the pre-hearing conference and the subsequent letter of April 26, 2002, Petitioner generally confined its case to the admonition of the SWRCB as to what was relevant at this purely procedural stage. Taken collectively, the SWRCB direction was that the question for the hearing would be whether there is "new" water in the river that is "different" from the water that was in the river when the river was declared to be fully appropriated.

Nowhere in any of the communication from the SWRCB to the parties did the SWRCB suggest that Petitioner was obligated to demonstrate that its priority right to the discharged nontributary groundwater should be satisfied before the needs of senior appropriators of native water. The letter does not indicate that the purpose of the hearing would be to determine how the new water would have been allocated had it been in the river in 1958-1964, and, in fact, the letter

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explicitly excludes from consideration the question of whether the water is required to go to senior water users.

Indeed, Petitioners reasonably concluded based upon the Notice, that in order to be consistent with the Notice, the hearing on the Petition would be required to exclude consideration of senior water users. If the hearing were to result in a finding that the water at issue should go to senior water users, then it would necessarily need to find that SCWC does not have any claims to that water that might give it a greater priority. These are precisely the claims that would be presented through SCWC's Application. In other words, any finding concerning senior water users would necessarily involve a decision on SCWC's Application. Such a finding is in direct conflict with the phased process announced in the Notice.

C. The Hearing Officer's Rulings Confirmed the Limited Scope of the Hearing:

Testimony by SCWC Was Excluded That Would Have Been Relevant if the

SWRCB Were to Compare the Relative Rights of the Parties to Non
Tributary Groundwater Discharged by Aerojet

SCWC attempted to establish background and context for the conditions under which the discharged groundwater was being added to the American River. However, based upon the understood scope of the hearing, Aerojet filed an objection to portions of SCWC and the County's proffered testimony. (Aerojet Objection dated May 30, 2001.) Aerojet noted that, "[t]he SWRCB has defined the objective of this proceeding to be the determination of whether there is "new water" justifying a revision to the declaration . . . ." (Aerojet Objection 2:17-19.) The evidence that Aerojet objected to was testimony the County offered, "asserting the County's claim of a senior water right . . ." and testimony offered by SCWC about Aerojet's impairment of its water rights. (Aerojet Objection 4:5-20.)

At the May 31, 2002 Hearing, the Hearing Officer sustained Aerojet's objection as to SCWC. That portion of SCWC's proffered written testimony that was relevant to the question of whether Aerojet had wrongfully obtained possession of the Petitioner's groundwater by trespass (and thus whether the treated water could be considered abandoned) was stricken, except for

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those portions relating to general physical facts concerning the locations in question in the hearing. (RT: 14:17-15:9.) The Hearing Officer stated that:

I am prepared to allow some of this testimony as to the number, status of wells as general background information. (RT, 14:20-22.)

[M]uch of the underlying facts in Exhibit 8 speak to the general physical location situation at the location and will be allowed. (RT, 15:7-9.)

In other words, SCWC's testimony was allowed in the hearing only to the extent that it pertained to physical facts. Issues that may have been relevant to determining the relative priority of the competing claimants and the potential success of an Application filed by SCWC based, upon the superiority of its right to the discharged groundwater over appropriators of native water, were specifically excluded from the hearing.

The Hearing Officer addressed the objection to the County's evidence in a consistent manner by letter to the parties dated June 12, 2002. The Hearing Officer excluded evidence offered by the County regarding the ultimate disposition of the discharged water, including whether any new water identified would be required to go to senior water right users.

Similar treatment was accorded the United States Bureau of Reclamation ("USBR") which introduced testimony the sole purpose of which was to argue that the FAS Declaration should not be revised based upon impacts to senior right holders. The Draft Decision relies heavily upon this testimony and, in fact, Figure 2 from the Draft Order is merely a modified version of USBR's Exhibit 1. (See Draft Order p.19.) However, at the hearing after the USBR provided a description of its intended testimony, the Hearing Officer explicitly acknowledged that this material was outside the noticed scope of the hearing.

H.O. Silva: For the benefit of the other parties, I think we agree this sort of goes beyond the original intent of [this] hearing, but we are allowing it in at this time.

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Mr. Turner: As you mentioned, Mr. Silva, at the prehearing conference, what we were trying to - you wer
looking at the question as to whether this water is new water and, therefore, should be subject to
appropriation or whether it is water that was taken into account when the stream was declared fully
appropriated. I recognize that (RT, 101:4-12.)

Identical expressions of the limited scope of the hearing are replete throughout the record. For example, in its opening statement at the hearing, Aerojet described the purpose of the hearing as follows:

The issue before this Board is whether water that Aerojet is discharging or may discharge into the American River is water that was taken into account when the Board adopted this Declaration of Fully Appropriated Stream System. (RT, 151:6-10.)

... Aerojet is participating in this hearing to offer its evidence concerning the nature of the groundwater extracted by its wells and urges the Board to continue on the path it has set out, determining in this hearing whether there is new water available in the American River .... (RT, 152:16-21.)

In a letter submitted by the Friends of the River to the SWRCB on May 9, 2002, Friends of the River based its decision to withdraw from the proceedings on the limited scope:

After reviewing the focus of issues to be considered at the upcoming hearing on revising the fully appropriated stream status of the American River, it appears that the scope of the Board's inquiry (whether "non-native" water has been introduced into the river since the initial declaration) is quite narrow. . . . Clearly, providing the petitioners with guidance on whether they can claim "priority" on such "abandoned" groundwater discharges over senior water rights holders and public trust values is fundamental to their understanding of the wisdom of the approach on which they appear to be embarking . . . . The scope of this proceeding will not clarify these issues.

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The County of Sacramento similarly criticized the limited nature of the proceedings and 1 urged the SWRCB to look beyond what the County perceived to be the noticed scope of the 2 hearing, though as indicated above, the SWRCB denied this request. 3 4 ... as we take a look at whether this is "new water" or not we are being told that we can't take a look at the 5 context or the history of how the water was developed and the whole story what's being done here. So it is 6 a very difficult situation to deal with. (RT, 258:19-23.) 7 8 So treating it as new water without any of that context really ignores a very fundamental aspect of what the 9 Board needs to dwell on and look at as it analyzes this question. It is not purely just simply a physical 10 hydrologic question of is this water that would or wouldn't be in the river. (RT, 259:15-19.) 11 12 Finally, the City of Sacramento presented two witnesses at the hearing: Mr. Gary Reents 13 and Mr. Robert Wagner. The purpose of Mr. Wagner's testimony was to offer an opinion on 14 whether the petitioner had met the burden that was established for it. 15 16 [I will] briefly summarize the issue that I focused on, which I think was set forth by the Board in a letter 17 dated . . . April 26th, 2002, which sort of defined, I think, the issue before us, which is whether the water 18 sought by the petitioner, Southern California Water Company, is new water. And new water is defined in 19 that direction from the Board, water that was not previously considered at the time the Lower American 20 River became fully appropriated or was declared fully appropriated by the decisions that led to its listing in 21 1989. (RT, 285:10-20.) 22 23 The City, in fact, seems to have anticipated the very problem which now confronts 24 Petitioner and the SWRCB: 25 26 While the Board has narrowly scoped this proceeding, as we just saw in the discussion that preceded this 27 and otherwise, you are allowing considerable testimony that goes outside the scope that you defined. And 28

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in addition, a number of written submittals that we have seen contain statements which either go beyond the scope or mischaracterize the scope. So we would just like to strongly recommend that this will not be a problem, provided that the Board is very careful in the findings and determination it makes and avoids compromising the due process of this proceeding but limiting itself as articulated by you during the prehearing conference and, of course, the correspondence that preceded that prehearing conference. (RT, 279:20-280:8 emphasis added.)

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# THE DRAFT ORDER

Substantial and "Uncontroverted" Evidence Demonstrated a Change of ·A. Circumstances Sufficient to Warrant a Limited Revision of the FAS Declaration Justifying the Processing of Petitioner's Proposed Application

The record is replete with uncontroverted substantial evidence that the non-tributary groundwater that Aerojet is and will discharge into the river is "new" water. In fact, the SWRCB correctly found that substantially all of the water discharged by Aerojet constitutes new water.

We find that groundwater in Layers B through E beneath the WGSA is new water, and that groundwater in Aquifers C through E beneath the ARGET is new water. (Draft Order section 7.1 (p. 16).)

The decision to include the Lower American River in the FAS Declaration was based upon SWRCB decisions adopted between 1958 and 1965. This time frame provides the baseline from which to decide whether there has been a change in circumstances resulting in additional water entering the Lower American River. Aerojet did not begin its groundwater treatment operations until August of 1998 - more than thirty years after any of the possible baselines suggested by any party. (RT, at 51:5-9; RT, at 111:21-24.) It is not possible that the groundwater treatment operations at issue in this hearing were considered by the SWRCB when it included the Lower American River in the FAS Declaration.

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Mr. Keith DeVore, the Director of the Department of Water Resources for the County of Sacramento and Sacramento County Water Agency further testified that the "discharge constitutes new water that was not considered in [the] FAS Declaration." (County Exh. 1 at 1.)

The treated groundwater . . . discharged by Aerojet into Buffalo Creck, and subsequently discharged into the American River, is water not considered in any of the FAS Declarations previously certified. Moreover, to the knowledge of the authors of this testimony, this water has not been included in any hydrologic modeling conducted by the resource agencies for CEQA, NEPA and ESA compliance documents . . . In addition, the subject water has not been incorporated in any hydrologic modeling conducted in recent environmental documents prepared by SWRI [Surface Water Resources, Inc.] on behalf of various resource agencies. (County Exh. 2, at 12.)

The discharges were physically observed by Petitioner's expert Anthony Brown and Alex McDonald of the RWQCB and the volume was estimated in amounts up to 30,000 acre-feet per year. (Draft Order, pp.6-8.) The hydrologic conditions that governed the American River were surveyed, modeled and analyzed by experts for Petitioners, the County, and Aerojet. Virtually all the credible evidence corroborates the fact that the water is both non-tributary groundwater and was not considered during the prior fully appropriated stream determinations. Collectively, the substantial administrative record cited in Petitioner's closing brief, and not repeated here for purposes of brevity, demonstrates that a very large volume of non-tributary groundwater is being discharged into the American River and that this is a change in the hydrologic condition.

With the underlying record in this proceeding, the limited scope of the hearing, and the prior decisions of this SWRCB, a revised FAS Declaration was clearly proper. However, despite the relatively uncontested physical evidence and expert reports, the Draft Order would deny Petitioners the requested relief solely based upon two legally incorrect procedures: (1) declaring the circumstances under which Aerojet is discharging the non-tributary groundwater to be irrelevant to the proceeding while simultaneously considering the issue of abandonment and the needs of unmet appropriators, and (2) establishing a new unnoticed two-pronged test for establishing a "change of circumstances."

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В.	The Draft Order Makes the Incorrect Legal Conclusion That the Dischar				
	The Draft Order Mannes and The Bridge That May Have Informed				
	Water Is "Abandoned" While All Evidence That May Have Informed Such a				
	Determination Was Excluded From the Hearing				

The importance of whether the groundwater discharged by Aerojet is abandoned is of critical importance to the proposed decision to deny Petitioner's request. The Draft Order actually turns on the Draft Order's legal conclusion that the discharged water is "abandoned." (Draft Order § 6, pp.14-15.) Based upon the classification of the water as "abandoned," the Draft Order concludes that the discharged non-tributary groundwater is public water, and thus would have been available to senior right holders, and not to SCWC, had it been discharged to the river in 1958-1964.

However, as noted above, the Draft Order does not consider whether its ultimate conclusion that the groundwater is "abandoned" is appropriate in this context. In other words, the Draft Order does not consider whether it is possible for a wrong-doer to possess rights in the water such that it can "abandon" it as that term is used in the law. The analysis essentially depends on the assumption that Aerojet has a full ownership interest in the water which it has contaminated and then been ordered to pump and treat. This assumption, however, has no grounding in any of the evidence in the record, precisely because all such relevant evidence was explicitly excluded.

This issue of whether the water that is being discharged by Aerojet is properly classified as "abandoned" was a subject that SCWC actually attempted to address at the hearing. As seen above, the position of the USBR during its testimony was that the discharged water should be made available to satisfy existing right holders. For example, on cross-examination, Petitioner presented a series of hypotheticals to the USBR witness that tested the opinion concerning whether these new flows should be made available to senior right holders. (RT, 115:6-117:10.) The primary issue upon which the USBR's opinion rested was that the water should be made available to senior right holders because it is "abandoned." (RT, 116:4-7.)

Petitioner then offered a hypothetical which purpose was to challenge the appropriateness of the assumption of the water as "abandoned." (RT, 116:19-21.) Aerojet objected to such

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questioning. (RT, 117:3-5.) The Hearing Officer sustained the objection stating that, "I think we are getting too far into the next phase." (RT, 117:6-8.)

# The Draft Order Arbitrarily Concludes That the Circumstances Under Which Aerojet Obtains Temporary Possession of the Discharged Groundwater Are Irrelevant to the Proceeding

The Draft Order incorrectly, arbitrarily and contrary to law determines that the circumstances under which Aerojet makes the discharge are not relevant to the question of whether the groundwater was abandoned. Had Petitioner been allowed, it would have offered evidence that Petitioner has continuously produced groundwater from the Sacramento Basin for almost 50 years to serve to its municipal customers and that it now must seek replacement water due to contamination of the groundwater supply. Had Petitioner been permitted, it would have presented evidence on the extensive perchlorate contamination of the Sacramento Groundwater Basin caused by Aerojet, and therefore the record would reflect that Aerojet's possession of the treated groundwater is solely as a consequence of its wrongful conduct. Petitioner has both a legal and equitable interest in the discharged supply because, having trespassed against Petitioner's groundwater rights by contamination, Aerojet's interest is merely that of an involuntary trustee of the water for the benefit of Petitioner and other parties injured by the contamination under the legal doctrine of "constructive trust." 18

The constructive trust doctrine is an equitable remedy that requires a person who has wrongfully acquired property to return the property to its rightful owner. (See Civil Code § 2224; Haskel Engineering & Supply Co. v. Hartford Acc. & Indem. Co. (1978) 78 Cal.App.3d 371, 378.) "[T]he wrongful act giving rise to a constructive trust need not amount to fraud or intentional misrepresentation. All that must be shown is that the acquisition of the property was wrongful and that the keeping of the property by the defendant would constitute unjust enrichment." (Calistoga Civic Club v. Calistoga (1983) 143 Cal. App.3d 111, 116; see also Martin v. Kehl (1983) 145 Cal.App.3d 228; Santa Clarita Water Company v. Lyons (1984) 161 Cal.App.3d 450, 462.)

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In the instant case, the only reason that Aerojet is allowed to produce, treat and discharge the treated groundwater is that it does so pursuant to a cleanup order issued by the Regional Quality Control Board whereby it is remediating the groundwater basin that it polluted. Aerojet's unlawful interference with Petitioner's perennial right to appropriate groundwater is a trespass and therefore, wrongful. (Santa Clarita Water Company v. Lyons (1984) 161 Cal.App.3d 450, 451.) Accordingly, Aerojet's unlawful acquisition of the groundwater unequivocally supports the imposition of a constructive trust against Aerojet. (Santa Clarita Water Company v. Lyons (1984) 161 Cal.App.3d 450, 462; See Heckman v. Ahmanson (1985) 168 Cal.App.3d 119 (requiring the return of the property to the rightful owner).) The only duty of a constructive trustee is to convey the property to its rightful owner. (Calistoga Civic Club v. City of Calistoga 10 (1983) 143 Cal.App.3d 111, 117.) 11

Such evidence is undoubtedly relevant to the question of whether the water at issue is "abandoned." However, this is precisely the evidence that was excluded when Aerojet's evidentiary objection was sustained. Such evidence was declared to be outside the noticed scope of the hearing, and consequently, no conclusions made by the Draft Order concerning whether the water at issue is abandoned can be made based upon evidence in the record.

The Draft Order should be revised to indicate that it is the intention of Petitioner and the injured parties that is relevant to the determination of whether the discharged groundwater has been abandoned and that, pursuant to the noticed scope of the hearing, such a determination will be made in the second phase of these proceedings. For the benefit of this second phase it is worth noting here that SCWC has no intention of abandoning its interest in the discharged groundwater.

The Draft Order's Requirement That Petitioner Satisfy a Two-Prouged Test D. is Inconsistent With the Statutory Scheme and the Proper Exercise of Board Discretion

Despite all the admonitions and assurances regarding the scope of the proceeding, the Draft Order announces that to demonstrate a "change of circumstances" and thereby prevail on the merits, a petitioner must now prove that not only are there substantial quantities of new water

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but that the new water is of sufficient magnitude to satisfy the unmet needs of downstream
appropriators. Of course, the very first time that the second part of the Draft Order's two-part test
was ever mentioned by any party or the SWRCB itself, was in the Draft Order itself when it
became the sole basis for the denial of the Petition.
The "change in circumstances" refers to a change in circumstances from those
considered in previous water right decisions this consists of two elements.
First, the petitioner must show that the water at issue is "new water" Second,
the petitioner must show that if the water is new water, circumstances have
changed so that it would have been available for appropriation by new users
during the relevant time period. (Draft Order p.16.)
By definition, the statement of the test presumes the resolution of the express issue the
April 26, 2002 Letter indicated would be reserved for the Application phase: Whether the unmet
needs of senior appropriators would prevail over the needs of the injured groundwater user.
[Denial of the Petition] is based on a finding that the water at issue would not
have been available for new appropriation if the water had been discharged into
the American River at the time the decisions were issued that provide the basis
for listing the River on the Declaration. Rather, the water would be allocated in
order of priority to surface water right holders in the Basin at that time. (Draft
Order p.2.)
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We find that even if the treated groundwater at issue in the proceeding was not tributary to the river during the relevant time period (i.e. it is "new" water), if it had been discharged to the river at the time, it would have been dedicated to satisfying unmet demands with a higher priority than any permit SCWC might acquire. (Draft Order p.22.)

Thus, even though SCWC met its burden to establish that a portion of the discharged water is water that would not otherwise have reached the River in

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1958 to 1964, SCWC did not dett	onstrat	te tha	it the	circumstances have changet
so that this "new water" would ha	ve bet	n av	ailable	e in 1958 to 1964. (Draft
Order p.28.)				1 de la Yange Ondon's

Petitioner's request to revise the FAS Declaration and the Draft Order's introduction of the new sine qua non for establishing a change in circumstances must be evaluated in the prevailing statutory context. In summary, applicable statutes and regulations provide that a petitioner must demonstrate good cause for the Declaration to be revised for the filing of an application under specified circumstances and that the application be tested on the merits against competing claims and the subsequent exercise of SWRCB discretion.

Water Code § 1205 authorizes the SWRCB to declare a stream system fully appropriated where previous water rights decisions have determined that "no water remains available for appropriation." In the instant case, the SWRCB initially exercised its discretion to designate the American River as fully appropriated in WR 89-25, and it has chosen to maintain that designation in subsequent orders. (See WR 90-2; WR 91-07; WR 98-08.) However, notwithstanding the designation, the Water Code § 1206 invests the SWRCB with discretion to establish conditions for the future processing of applications. In relevant part, § 1206(a) authorizes the SWRCB to:

[P]rovide, in any declaration that a stream is fully appropriated, for acceptance for filing of applications to appropriate water under <u>specified</u> conditions. Any provision to that effect shall specify the conditions and may contain application limitations, including but not limited to, limitations on the purpose of use, the instantaneous rate of diversion, or the season of diversion, and on the amount of water that may be diverted annually. The board <u>may</u> make the limitations applicable to individual applications to appropriate water or to the aggregate of the applications or to both. (Water Code Section 1206(a) emphasis added.)

Under the plain meaning of Section 1206(a), the SWRCB has authority to authorize the filing and processing of specific applications under specified conditions and to make those conditions applicable to individual applications. California Code of Regulations § 871 further

supports the notion that the SWRCB has discretion to revise the FAS Declaration for good cause.

The SWRCB's revision of the FAS Declaration

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... may be based upon any relevant factor, including but not limited to a change of circumstances from those considered in a previous water right decision determining that no water remains available for appropriation, or upon reasonable cause derived from hydrologic data, water usage data, or other relevant information acquired by the Division of Water Rights in the course of the investigation conducted by it. (Ca. Code Reg. § 871(b).)

The Draft Order's articulation of a requirement that Petitioner satisfy both prongs of its two-pronged test to establish a change of circumstances constitutes an impermissible limitation on Petitioner's ability to request and the SWRCB discretion to grant a Petition. By their express wording, neither Water Code § 1206 nor CCR § 871(b) constrain the SWRCB from revising the fully appropriated stream status solely upon Petitioner's demonstration of a "change of circumstances." In fact, CCR § 871(b) expressly states that the reasonable cause may be based on other factors; for example, the SWRCB may elect to issue a revision on good cause based upon hydrologic data or other relevant information. (Cal. Code Reg. § 871(b).)

Moreover, there is no requirement that Petitioner establish that the new water is adequate to satisfy the requirements of all unmet appropriations of native water as a precondition to the SWRCB revising the FAS Declaration. No such standard is ever made the predicate of a successful application in either statute or regulation. Our research has not disclosed a single instance in which such an interpretation has ever been raised, considered or applied by the SWRCB in the context of a fully appropriated stream designation. The SWRCB's most recent decision regarding the standard to be applied to a petition filed for the revision of a fully appropriated stream in WR Order 2000-12, In re Matter of the Petitions to Revise Declaration of Fully Appropriated Streams to Allow Processing Specified Applications to Appropriate Water From the Santa Ana River, makes no mention of this two-pronged test. (See further In the Matter of Application 27554 of the Lost Hills Water District (1994) WR 94-1.)

As a result, the Draft Order is not based on whether there is actually "new water" available or whether the "new water" was not taken into consideration when it was originally

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determined that the river was fully appropriated. Rather, the Draft Order is based upon a counterfactual situation which postulates what would have happened had this water been available in the American River in 1958-1964!

Furthermore, the Draft Order applies its new two-pronged test in an arbitrary manner. The Draft Order postulates what would have happened had the water been available in the relevant time period, but fails entirely to include in that scenario the issue of why the water is available. That is, it considers the availability of the water in the counterfactual situation, but does not consider the facts and circumstances surrounding why the water is available. But if the water had been discharged to the river during the relevant time period, such considerations would have been relevant to an application filed by SCWC and, "any permit that SCWC might acquire." (Draft Order p.22.) Additionally, the Draft Order does not provide any description of the factors were used in the hypothetical consideration of what would have happened had the water been available in 1958-1964. For example, in its consideration of "any permit that SCWC might acquire," did the Draft Order consider the availability of the water under the Water Code and precedents as they existed in 1958-1964, or did it apply the current state of the law to the hypothetical 1958-1964 scenario?

E. If the Draft Order Should Be Read to Authorize Petitioner's Recapture of its
Groundwater Discharged by Aerojet Without a Permit, Then the Order
Should be Revised to Make This Clear

As some potential consolation to Petitioner, the Draft Order suggests that the producer of foreign water can stop abandoning the water and instead dispose of the water pursuant to a

It is worth noting in this regard that no party who participated in the hearing process offered any evidence concerning whether an application to appropriate non-tributary groundwater if it had been filed by SCWC in the time period 1958-1964 would have been processed. (See if it had been filed by SCWC in the time period 1958-1964 would have been processed. (See Draft Order Section 5.2 "Positions of the Parties.") In fact, a careful reading of the SWRCB's analysis of the second part of this two-part test in section 7.2 of the Draft Order reveals no substantive consideration of testimony provided by any party. The reason why the SWRCB does not provide such an analysis is because it has nothing to analyze: no party submitted evidence concerning how the water at issue in the Petition would have been allocated in the time period 1958-1964. And the reason for this omission is similarly simple: no party thought this was to be an issue in the hearing and it tests rational thinking to believe that the SWRCB would intentionally make it so.

contract or otherwise. (Draft Order p.15.) In this way, the unmet needs of downstream surface water right holders would not preclude the discharge and recapture of the non-tributary groundwater.

Apparently, the Draft Order would countenance the use of the American River to convey and recapture groundwater without the requirement of a permit from the SWRCB so long as the water has not been abandoned. (Draft Order p.15; Water Code Section 7075; See also RWQCB February 27, 2002 Letter p.2 (Issue No. 1).) Petitioner believes that such a construction is anothema to the SWRCB's dual role of managing water quantity and water quality and will push the parties to further litigation in the courts to determine the relative rights to the discharged groundwater.

Other western states maintain control over surface water while routinely allowing the appropriation of foreign or developed water outside of the priorities governing native water through an order that the native supply has been augmented. For example, Colorado allows parties to develop augmentation plans under which developed water, such as non-tributary groundwater, can be added to a surface water body and then diverted outside of the surface water priority system. (Colo. Rev. Stat. 37-92-103(9); Cache La Poudre Water Users Ass'n v. Glacier View Meadows (1976 Colo.) 550 P.2d 288.) However, such augmentation plans require recognition by the State Engineer and the Water Courts. In this way traditional priorities are respected as is the integrity of the water rights administration system.

However, if the SWRCB is committed to the approach presented in the Draft Order,

Petitioner respectfully requests that the Draft Order be amended so as to expressly acknowledge
the right of Petitioner and other parties injured by the contamination to assert their legal and
equitable right, title and interest in the discharged groundwater and their co-extensive right to
recapture the groundwater from the American River without filing an Application to Appropriate
with the SWRCB on a basis superior to Aerojet.

F. The Draft Order Constitutes a Windfall for Downstream Appropriators of Surface Water and is Contrary to the Stated Intent of the RWQCB to Provide a Replacement Water Supply for the Affected Communities

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If the Draft Order is not modified, the citizens of Rancho Cordova will suffer the loss of a
declining groundwater supply as a result of pervasive perchlorate contamination of groundwater
that is literally sucked from beneath their feet, treated and discharged by Aerojet to the American
River. The initial beneficiary of the activity will be the USBR who will benefit by acquiring a
new water supply of up to 30,000 acre-feet a year. The USBR will acquire this windfall, not by
merit, but simply by virtue of the location the RWQCB selected for the discharge of the non-
tributary water.

Yet, immediately prior to the SWRCB's issuance of the Notice, the RWQCB, Central Valley Region sent a letter to the SWRCB recommending that certain issues be part of the SWRCB's consideration of SCWC's Petition. (February 27, 2002 Letter.) This letter was quite clear that the RWQCB intends that the water at issue in the hearing should be used to provide replacement water for the communities affected by the Aerojet groundwater contamination.

The ROD contemplates that this treated groundwater be discharged to surface water and would be made available for reuse in the affected area to compensate for impacts to the groundwater basin caused by the contamination. (February 27, 2002 Letter p.5.)

The SWRCB's decision however, eviscerates this intention. If the Draft Order is adopted as written, then none of the water suppliers for the communities adversely impacted by the contamination will have any realistic opportunity to make use of the discharged water. Yet the Draft Order turns a blind eye, apparently because this does not constitute reasonable cause for a limited revision of the FAS Declaration.

#### III.

### CONCLUSION

The SWRCB should reconsider the Draft Order and revise it to grant SCWC's Petition. A proposed revised version of the Order is attached to these Comments as Exhibit "A." To do otherwise would be a violation of SCWC's basic procedural due process rights. Perhaps more

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importantly, however, adoption of the Draft Order would turn on its head the groundwater cleanup operation which is intended to help provide a replacement water supply for the affected communities. The Draft Order in its current form will prevent the affected communities from having access to the treated groundwater, and instead will make the water available to other parties who have not been harmed by the contamination of the groundwater basin. As was noted at the hearing, this result is a double penalty to the purveyors in this area. They were once penalized by the perchlorate contamination, and now they would be penalized a second time by the Draft Order that would dedicate the discharged groundwater to the Bureau. As such, the Draft Order is arbitrary, unreasonable, bad public policy and manifestly unfair.

Dated: June 11, 2003

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#### PROOF OF SERVICE

I am a resident of the State of California, over the age of eighteen years, and not a party to the within action. My business address is HATCH AND PARENT, 21 East Carrillo, Santa Barbara, California 93101. On June 12, 2003, I served the within document:

## SCWC COMMENTS TO DRAFT ORDER WRO 2003-XXXX

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(by electronic submission) on the following parties, at their email addresses provided:

State Water Resources Control Board Division of Water Rights 1001 I Street, 14th Floor Sacramento, CA 95814

WrHearing@waterrights.swrcb.ca.gov

x

by placing the document listed above in a sealed envelope with postage thereon fully prepaid, in the United Stated mail at Santa Barbara, California, addressed as set forth below.

#### SEE SERVICE LIST BELOW

I am readily familiar with the firm's practice of collection and processing correspondence for mailing. Under that practice it would be deposited with the U.S. Postal Service on that same day with postage thereon fully prepaid in the ordinary course of business. I am aware that on motion of the party served, service is presumed invalid if postal cancellation date or postage meter date is more than one day after date of deposit for mailing in affidavit.

x

(State) I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the above is true and correct.

Executed on June 12, 2003, at Santa Barbara, California.

Bronda Torres-Rosales

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